

Approved For Release

MORNING 26,457
SUNDAY 27,603

That Gap

It is quite possible that John F. Kennedy is President of the United States today because he terrified the country with claims that a "missile gap" between the United States and Russia threatened us with nuclear extinction. His victory margin was so narrow that any one of a dozen factors could have changed the result.

The fable of the missile gap was destroyed within weeks after JFK assumed office, and by his own Secretary of Defense. It never was, McNamara said.

Now comes Allen Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency under both Eisenhower and Kennedy, to explain that rumors of the missile gap were born because CIA misjudged Russian intentions. But Dulles emphasized that they were strictly that—rumors with no basis in fact.

This is probably pretty cold comfort to Richard M. Nixon who but for the nonexistent "gap" might have a different job today.

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